

Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

Discussion/Action Items:

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

The Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority (GWA) Steering Committee meeting was held at the San Joaquin County Robert J. Cabral Agricultural Center in Stockton, California (2101 E. Earhart Avenue Conference Rm 1). At approximately 8:42 a.m. roll call was taken of members only.

In attendance were Directors Mike Henry; Robert Holmes, Tom Flinn, and Alternate Directors ~~Walter Ward and Andrew Watkins~~. **Christy McKinnon for Stanislaus County was also present.**

Reminders were provided to the attendees regarding meeting procedures.

Motion: Andrew Watkins

2nd: Robert Holmes

II. Scheduled Items—Presentation Materials to be Posted on ESJGroundwater.org and Emailed.

A. Discussion/Action Items

1. Approval of the June 1st meeting minutes

No amendments to the minutes.

Motion: Alternate Director Andrew Watkins

2nd: Secretary Fritz Buchman

With no Opposed or Abstains, the minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Executive Order N -7-22 GSA and SJC EHD Compliance Efforts

Mr. Zidar of San Joaquin County stated the intent is that there will be no impact to municipal or domestic wells. All of the GSAs have adopted their own process to make the determination of consistency with the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) within their area. There are several permits pending and there may be concerns that permits are not coming out fast enough. Secretary Buchman commented that there are 16 or 17 permits/ pending applications, and that Environmental Health has engaged a consultant to help with the analysis of these well applications.

Alternate Director Watkins commented neighboring wells could affect the GSA findings. Brandon Nakagawa of SSJID provided comments regarding the common process for a well permitting, noting that it is a ministerial process, and it should remain this way; if a well meets the state and local standards, Environmental Health issues a new well permit. We want to avoid a discretionary

permit process since it would create other issues (CEQA) that may have significant fiscal impacts and result in permitting delays. Mr. Zidar noted that there was legislation in the current session that could memorialize the Executive Order requirements (AB 2201). There was also legislation to require GSAs to mitigate any impact to private domestic wells should these occur, and this would be without cost to the impacted party. This legislation did not make it out of committee. Secretary Buchman indicated County Counsel is aware of the desire to keep the process ministerial. Mary Elizabeth of the Sierra Club commented that Zone 2 money should be set aside to assist with establishing a program where the public can locate wells and see if their wells are impacted by other wells.

3. SJC Drought Response and Situation Report

Mr. Zidar discussed the Office of Emergency Services (OES) drought response and situational status report which provides information regarding what is happening in the County and the response to drought. For example, 14 wells were permitted in June whereas in 2015, there were 275 well permits issued (peak) & most were domestic. Snowpack is the reservoir. Lake Comanche is at 53% of capacity; New Hogan and New Melones are at 33% of capacity.

Water Conservation: San Joaquin County is currently in Stage 1 requirements though we are moving to Stage 2. Director Flinn commented that the report looks like it was created by OES 3 or 4 years ago. He suggested adding Lake Pardee with exported water information to get a real water picture. Mr. Zidar noted that DWR has done a great job of making information available and that this report and the State's web page provide an aggregated state snapshot. Brandon Nakagawa of SSJID commented that the number of wells correlates to development activity and the economy. Dry wells are more a function of age and are not always due to lower groundwater levels. It was noted that those were important points. Alternate Director Watkins commented that if you must deepen a well you have to drill a new well.

Mary Elizabeth of the Sierra Club commented that California Water's service area is not included in this OES report or considered. She mentioned the OES agreement with Self-Help Enterprises to get assistance through the OES, but the GWA website does not provide this information. She said there should be outreach for well users in the County and it is not happening. It was noted that the Self Help Program just got going and that this program was developed via Fresno State working with the Valley Water Coalition. OES sent out a letter requesting support for filling water trucks that would deliver water to those experiencing issues with dry wells. Alternate Director Watkins stated that Stockton East is supporting this and that it is in the works.

4. Discussion and debrief on DWR Comment and Response

Mr. Zidar commented that he has not heard from Woodbridge Irrigation District and that ~~Calaveras County didn't pass because a proposed project didn't get to the GSP~~. Stanislaus County adopted the revised GSP drafted by the Authority, however, there's a project in Stanislaus County that was proposed to be included in the GSP but did not reach until after they already adopted the revised GSP. He is working with both parties to move the adoption of the Revised GSP. Director Henry wants that data regarding the status of adoptions sent to all GSAs, so everyone is aware (of timing

and activities). Christy McKinnon of Stanislaus County stated it was difficult to update the project list and asked GWA for something to ensure the applicant that their project can be included in the GSP and grant application. Mr. Zidar stated we are not adding projects at this time but there will be a subsequent 'call for projects' to all GSAs either prior to the next grant cycle or before the annual report but noted that there is not time to do anymore edits to the Revised GSP at this time. Secretary Buchman suggested checking with DWR to see about making minor administrative amendments and the process for updating the project list. Mr. Zidar would like to explore that in more depth at another meeting, including minor updates & expectations for GWA policy

5. SGMA Implementation Grant DWR/GWA Agreement and Local Project Sponsor Agreements

Mr. Zidar indicated the DWR/GWA grant agreement for \$7.6M for San Joaquin County, City of Stockton, and North San Joaquin Water Conservation District (the local project sponsors) is being coordinated with DWR. We will need to have Board action on the agreement and the Local Project Sponsor agreements between the GWA and those awarded funding. DWR has been doing a great job in quickly making the money available to grantees.

6. Dream Project Status and Briefing

Mr. Zidar informed the Committee that the Eastern Water Alliance (NSJWCD, SEWD, CSJWCD) holds the export permit for the Dream project. The Board of Supervisors issues the export permit. A monitoring Committee ensures compliance with the permit conditions. Director Flinn stated that the real key has been developing partnerships between EBMUD and the local agencies. Next phase is to evaluate expansion of the project concept and negotiate w/ EBMUD and that they (NSJWCD) are open to that. What is the role of the County? Mr. Zidar replied that we are matchmakers and cheerleaders that seek to ensure that the maximum benefits are achieved for the basin pursuant to the GSP. Secretary Buchman commented that there was a meeting with EBMUD at the ACWA Conference and that County is a convener for the 1st phase and has a leadership role and that of a potential partner in the next phase related to developing the Mokelumne River Water Right held by the Mokelumne River Water and Power Authority.

Brandon Nakagawa commented that that while there is a lot of money there is a loss of staff aging out, so how do we bring together the resources to implement plans? We need to find and allocate the resources to implement project management actions.

III. Staff Reports, State of California Department of Water Resources

Chelsea Spier will provide the report at the GWA Board meeting, due to this meeting's time constraints.

IV. Public Comments

Mary Elizabeth of the Sierra Club commented that earlier this week the DWR workshop on climate change used New Hogan as an example of precipitation changes noting there could be a 11% reduction. She further mentioned the 2017 San Joaquin County & Cal Water Memoranda of Agreement which expires 2 years after GSP adoption and inquired if there is another agreement in

force. She also suggested evening meetings, so people do not have to take time off work to be engaged in the process.

V. Director Comments

Director Henry commented that it would be wise to pay attention to annual reports. Mr. Zidar encouraged GSAs to update their project descriptions.

VI. Future Agenda Items

Mr. Zidar commented that for future Agenda Items we will focus on DWR comments and GSP implementation of the revised project management actions. We will work with the TAC to bring recommendations to the Steering Committee regarding the Water accountability Framework (WAF) and Funding Strategies, and how the GWA AD Hoc Committees are to hold us accountable, get alignment on the purpose of the WAF, make the best use of resources, and develop a work plan.

VII. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: Director Holmes
2nd: Alternate Watkins
Meeting was Adjourned at 10:30am